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# The President's Daily Brief

*March 13, 1974*

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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

THE PRESIDENT'S DAILY BRIEF

March 13, 1974

PRINCIPAL DEVELOPMENTS

President Asad of Syria has assured the Saudis that he does not intend to attack Israeli forces in the Golan Heights. Both sides, however, are building up their forces in the area. (Page 1)

The assassination of a prominent leftist in Guatemala City by gunmen believed to be sponsored by the government will raise tensions further and has already provoked action by students. (Page 2)

During a recent visit by President Mobutu of Zaire, Egypt's President Sadat cautioned the African leader against falling into the clutches of the Russians. (Page 3)

Peruvian President Velasco's health appears to be deteriorating. (Page 3)

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SYRIA-ISRAEL

President Asad has assured the Saudis that he has no intention of attacking Israeli forces in the Golan Heights and promised to consult the Saudis and the Egyptians before taking any such action. Both the Syrians and the Israelis, however, are continuing to build up their forces in the Heights.

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The Israelis, meanwhile, are preparing to cope with any new fighting on the Golan front. According to information received by the [redacted] at least some Israeli units in the Golan Heights are overstrength, and Israeli troops have been moved to positions from which they can better defend against Syrian efforts to pinch off the salient.

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GUATEMALA

The assassination of a prominent leftist political activist in Guatemala City on Monday by gunmen believed to be sponsored by the government will raise tensions further. Late yesterday, after the victim's funeral, students clashed with police. There have been no reports of casualties. A high-level government official had earlier told the US Embassy that agitators intended to give students small arms. The official said the police had orders to control disturbances with as little violence as possible, but the government fears the students will now seek conflicts with police, rather than avoiding them as they had in recent days.

General Efraim Rios Montt, the defeated presidential candidate, reportedly is undecided how to press his charge that the government rigged the election. He apparently still advocates a peaceful approach, but he may not have much influence on how hostility to the government manifests itself. President Arana remains determined to turn over the presidency to General Laugerud on July 1. Arana apparently will allow the military to assume control of the government only if public order deteriorates. Yesterday, the congress completed the formality of choosing Laugerud over Rios, following the congressional recount on Monday.

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NOTES

Egypt-USSR: President Mobutu of Zaire, who recently toured the Middle East, has given Ambassador Vance some flavor of his talks with Sadat. Sadat, after commenting favorably on the US, cautioned Mobutu against falling into the clutches of the Russians. "Once they sell you equipment you spend the next 100 years paying for it. They would take all your copper and other raw materials." Sadat illustrated his point by placing both hands around his neck in a strangle hold.

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